Fire in Frontier Mail

696. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fire broke out in the bogies of Frontier Mail near Ludhiana in the early hours of 15th May, 2003;

(b) if so, the number of passengers who lost their lives and the number of those seriously injured as a result of the accident;

(c) the amount of *ex-gratia* paid by the Railways for the deceased and those seriously injured;

(d) whether statutory inquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety has been completed; and

(e) if so, the findings thereof and action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Dead-36

Grievous-02

(c) *Ex-gratia* amounting to Rs. 36 Lakhs have been given to the next of kin of those dead and Rs. 30,000/- to the grievous injured involved in the fire accident.

(d) No, Sir, Statutory Inquiry by the Commissioner of Railway Safety is going on and he has submitted his Preliminary Inquiry Report and he has mentioned that the cause will be finalised on receipt of forensic report only.

(e) Does not arise.

Refrigerated coaches

697. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coach Factory has manufactured refrigerated rail coaches for movement of fresh fruits and green vegetables by the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of such Coaches to be built; and

(d) by when they will be made available to Railways authorities for commercial utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The first Refrigerated Parcel Van was formally inauguarted on 1st November, 2002 at Ernakulam Junction of Southern Railway. It is running successfully between Gorakhpur-Bangalore since then. It was manufactured by Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala.

(c) and (d) Manufacture of 9 additional Refrigerated Parcel Vans has been planned this year.

Conversion of Sakari-Nirmali rail line

†698. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of Sakari-Jhanjharpur-Nirmali and Jhanjharpur-Loukala meter gauge lines and the separate amount anticipated for broad gauge conversion thereof;

(b) whether these lines located in flood-prone area of Indo-Nepal border occupy special importance;

(c) whether Government have disapproved the conversion because of the same being non-remunerative; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose to review the scheme and undertake the conversion work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) The length of Saakri-Jhanjharpur-Nirmali and Jhanjharpur-Laukhabazar meter gauge sections is 95.32 km. As per the results of the survey for gauge conversion of the section completed in January, 1999, cost of coversion of the line had been assessed at Rs. 89.71 crore.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.